



Adding Public Waters & Wetlands to the Aitkin County Public Waters Inventory (PWI)

The Minnesota DNR is seeking your comments to “correct” the Public Waters Inventory (PWI) in Aitkin County, which includes adding missing waters.

What Waters Can Be Added to the PWI (Minn. Stat. § 103G.005, subds. 15, 15a):

Basin and Lakes: Based on size, public lands, public access.

Streams: Natural and altered watercourses draining more than 2 square miles.

Wetlands: Type/class 3, 4, and 5 wetlands defined in “Circular 39” which include shallow and deep marshes and open water wetlands. Must be 10 or more acres in unincorporated areas, 2½ or more acres in incorporated.

Why Listing Public Waters on the PWI Matters:

Can require environmental review for projects. (Minn. Rules ch. 4410)

Can limit or condition construction, alteration, or drainage of waters. (Minn. Stat. ch.103G).

DEADLINE for PWI Comments: Feb. 27, 2026

DNR-PWI Comment Map: <https://tinyurl.com/MAPCommentDNR-PWI>

DNR-PWI Comment Form: <https://tinyurl.com/CommentDNR-PWI>

Email Comments & Evidence to: PWI.Update.dnr@state.mn.us

KEY REFERENCE

Minnesota Natural Resources Atlas (Best source to identify PWI waters. Zoom in on selected area, click on potential PWI wetlands or stream segments to get more information. Add “layers” for Public Waters Inventory, Water Buffers - Watercourse and Public Ditches and Wetlands, National Wetlands Inventory, “Circular 39.”

<https://mnatlas.org/gis-tool/>

DNR Public Waters Meeting – January 28 at 6:00 pm
Aitkin County Library (community room)
110 1st Ave. NE, Aitkin, MN 56431

Even if you’re not sure you will comment, please attend this meeting, ask questions and take notes to help clarify the comment process. PLEASE READ suggested questions for the DNR on the back of this sheet.



Potential Questions for Minnesota DNR on Process to Correct Public Waters Inventory (PWI) in Aitkin County

- How did DNR make sure that people in the community learned that they had the opportunity to correct the PWI and add public waters and public waters wetlands? Who got notice?
- What technical assistance is DNR providing for members of the public to prepare their comments? Is there a person at DNR they can contact?
- Will comments be considered if they are emailed to the DNR at PWI.Update.dnr@state.mn.us using evidence other than the form on the DNR website?
- If members of the public identify a Class 3, 4, or 5 wetland in Aitkin County that is 10 acres or larger (as defined in Circular 39), will the DNR assume that it is a new wetland and expect the public to prove otherwise?
- Is the DNR going to consider public waters and public waters wetlands identified by using the Minnesota Natural Resources Atlas?
- In DNR's list of proposed corrections to the public waters inventory for streams, there are many short sections less than half a mile. Is the DNR considering the whole stream, including the proposed correction, to be one public water that drains more than 2 square miles?
- If members of the public find historical maps that show a segment of a stream was altered from its natural course, so it is not just a man-made ditch but an altered stream watercourse, will the DNR list that segment of a stream as a public water?
- Doesn't the DNR have to consider any correction to the PWI that is supported by the evidence, whether or not it uses the specific forms and links that DNR has suggested on its website?

If you have questions about the Aitkin County PWI correction process that DNR has not answered, please contact info@waterlegacy.org and Sophia or Paula will respond.